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REMOVAL OF THE OFFENSIVE THREAT IN CUBA

31

Introduction

Though present U. S. measures, if continued, will prevent an unrestrained Soviet buildup in Cuba, they probably cannot stop either limited accretions to the current missile force or efforts to bring weapons already in Cuba to full operational status.

What further actions are required? We have made substantial progress toward one objective of halting the Soviet buildup. However, present measures do not eliminate the missiles now in Cuba.

Elimination is of central importance. The Soviet missiles in Cuba do have military significance, while the political cost of failure to get rid of them would be severe.

Their military significance is that, in a Soviet no-warning attack on U. S. strategic forces, the Cuban missiles already there could reduce by about 30 per cent the number of our surviving vehicles, and by about 40 per cent the number of weapons that we could deliver on Soviet targets.*

The political impact of failure to eliminate the missiles would also be severe. It would be a resounding defeat suffered in an area dominated by U. S. power. Belief of friend, enemy, and neutral will be reduced in U. S. determination and ability to take hard action when needed. Our political leverage will suffer, weakening the U. S. perhaps very dangerously in tests to come.

U. S. Options to Secure Removal

We might:

a. negotiate the removal of the missiles and bombers without further major military initiatives on our part.

b. apply additional pressure to make Cubans and Russians dismantle them.

c. attack them.

We would clearly prefer the Soviets to elect to remove or destroy these weapons without further action or negotiation by us, (perhaps while Kruschev claims they never were there). We should not rule out the possibility that this will be done in the next several days.

* See Annex 1, Cuba and the Strategic Threat for details.

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With solid OAS support, a large majority of the Security Council and strong support in the General Assembly, plus the bargaining leverage of the quarantine, we are in some respects in a good position for a negotiation. Further military pressure may lose us support amongst allies and neutrals and force a reaction from Krushchev we would just as soon avoid.

On the other hand, negotiations are likely to be prolonged over a period during which there would be an erosion of international support for the U. S. position. The Soviets can be expected to dwell on the similarity of missiles in Turkey and Italy and indeed all overseas bases to those we have exposed in Cuba. U. S. agreement to an explicit, or even, tacit, trade-off is likely to present us with quite serious problems with our allies, nor so much on the modest military value of Jupiter but on the interest the U. S. would seem to show in trading their security for ours. Moreover, the obstacles would be near prohibitive to launching military attacks against Cuba after an extended negotiation in which the U. S. had agreed to the principle that a trade-off in bases exists, but rejected the Soviet price as too high.

In addition, if we were to show that, despite all our words to the contrary, we accept in fact living for months in 1963 with the Cuban offensive capability, we might considerably raise the Kremlin's estimate that we will in fact not find a 1964 with a "Free City" of Berlin intolerable.

The creation of a nuclear free zone in Latin America provides a simple rationale for the elimination of these weapons. The immediate costs for us would be some troublesome but probably tolerable constraints even if Africa were included. A negotiation along these lines poses obvious hazards for other areas in which we have, or may want to have, major bases most obviously in Europe and the Far East.

We could adopt a combination of stepped up pressure and generalized willingness to negotiate:

a. This is clearly a preferred course more compatible with the initial stance we have adopted than would be a perceptible shift to a conciliatory attitude - which would certainly be widely read to mean that we were getting cold feet.

b. Among forms of pressure which could be exerted, the first and most obvious is to carry out inspection to which we have already committed ourselves. Failure at this time to follow through with inspection could rapidly dissipate the momentum we have gained.

c. Another step would be to add jet aircraft fuels to the embargo list. Closing of this loop-hole would signal the possibility that we might stop all POL shipments.

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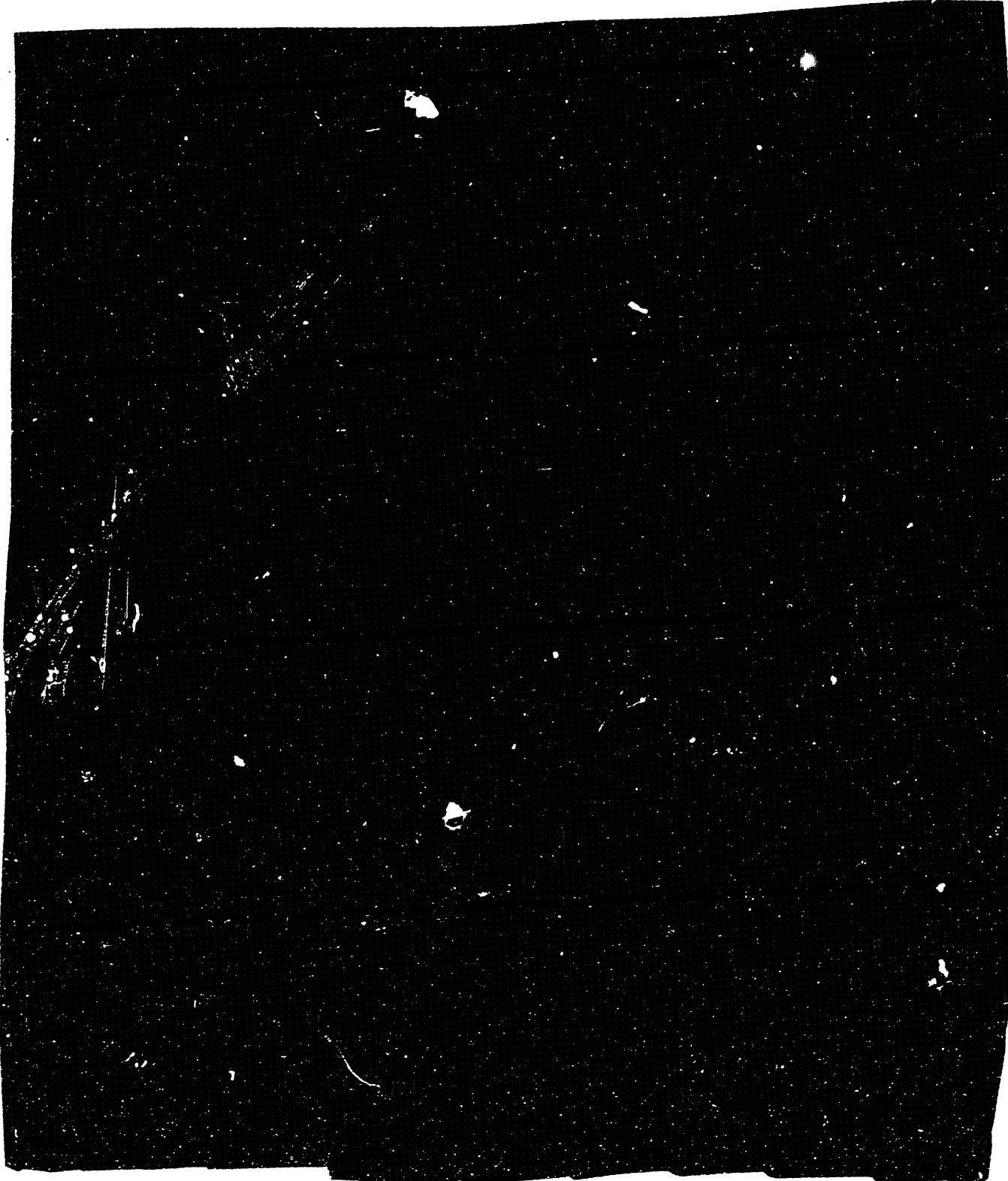
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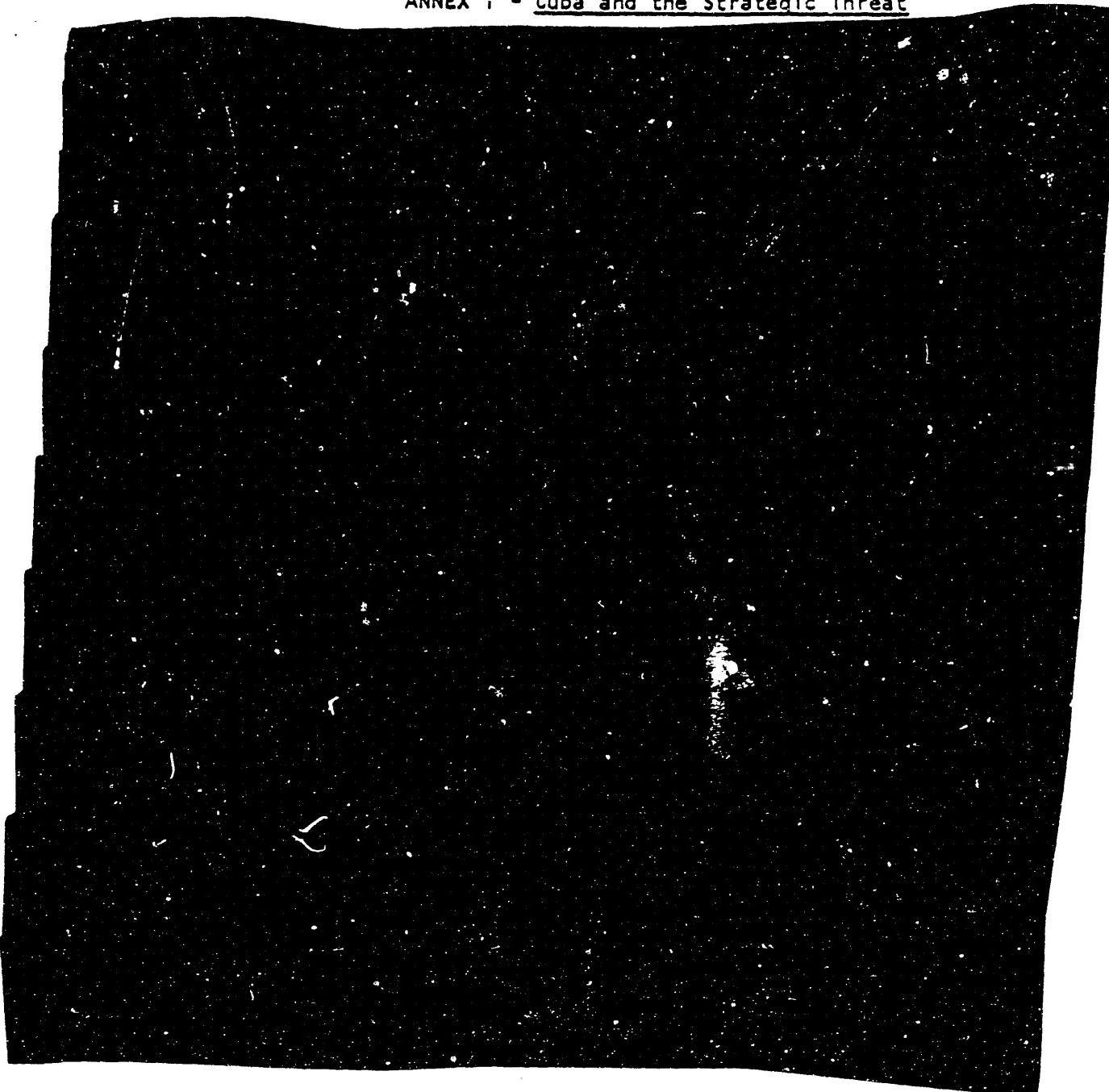
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ANNEX I - Cuba and the Strategic Threat



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Surviving U.S. Strategic Capabilities
Soviet no-warning attack, 1962

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ANNEX 2 - Considerations Bearing on Forcible Removal of Weapons Systems
in Cuba ..

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